

# WHAT IS BIOCOGENETIC PEACE EDUCATION?



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## **WHAT IS BIOCOGNETIC PEACE EDUCATION?**

**The fundamental intent of Youth Peace Literacy is to address what prevents peace, that is, what creates conflict, individually and globally.**

BioCognitive Peace Education™ is a completely original approach to understanding the nature and structure of human conflict at all levels – by avoiding, resolving and managing it. BioCognitive Peace Education™ has been expressly designed to reflect the nature and structure of the bully/victim cycle that creates conflict – from the playground to the battlefield – in the way we have been conditioned to think and act.

**Our pioneering program benefits society in two ways.**

1. It helps young people cope with a growing social problem - the bullying/victim cycle.
2. As these young people grow up, it helps them avoid and reduce adult violence.

**How does BioCognitive Peace Education™ address conflict that leads to war?**

By understanding the basic factors that create conflict one can address it at the primary level in the way we have been conditioned to think, starting with individual bullying that young people face everyday. Bullying not addressed in early childhood development can lead to bullying into adulthood, in domestic violence and war. In other words, the basic structure and nature of conditioned thinking that goes into creating a playground bully is essentially the same as the bully on the battlefield. Understanding the one you've understood the other.

**Why don't the conventional approaches to resolving conflict work?**

Understanding human conflict is conventionally addressed in a remedial, reactive way at the secondary level of "resolution" through therapeutic or moralistic means, as in the case of individual conflict, or through diplomatic or political intervention, as in the case of social conflict - or it is addressed at the tertiary level of managing conflict through judicial or military intervention. These remedial, reactive approaches do not address conflict at the primary prevention level in understanding and avoiding the fundamental psychological factors that create conflict in the conditioned way we think and act and are therefore essentially ineffective because they do not prevent conflict from happening in the first place.

**How can BioCognitive Peace Education™ help young people?**

BioCognitive Peace Education™ resources are designed to help people to understand the roots of human conflict and prevent it from happening before it escalates to a more serious level. It also gives young people the skills to find alternative humane, nonviolent means to

resolve conflict when it happens. Using a unique M.A.P.S.T.A.R.S.™ psycho-physical martial arts component this program gives one the confidence to avoid reacting in a flight or flight manner to aggression.

## **MORE ABOUT BioCognitive Peace Education™ – THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF HUMAN CONFLICT CREATED BY CONDITIONED THINKING**

BioCognitive Peace Education™ is the foundation for all the peace education resources in the Youth Peace Literacy web page. To clarify how conditioned, prejudicial thinking creates conflict, the BioCognitive Peace Education™ context was created to understand the whole of psychological conditioning—how it impacts the human brain mentally, emotionally and physically, and how it extends from the playground to the battlefield. This pioneering field is based on the initial insights of modern notable thinkers, including quantum physicist Dr. David Bohm, educational philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, and authors Aldous Huxley and George Orwell.

### **Creating the Intent and Process**

The first step in this process was to create a rationale for a consistent, scientific, empirical framework to comprehend conditioned, prejudicial thinking as a whole. The second step was to expand awareness of the nature, structure and implications of conditioned, prejudicial thinking that leads to human conflict at all levels. The third step was to expand awareness of conditioned thinking beyond its psychological make-up to include a holistic insight into the involuntary, automatic, three-stage, reactive configuration of conditioning in the mechanical disorganization of the human brain that produces an internal environment of discord. The next logical step was to create a significant justification to bring this urgent issue to the forefront of education as an essential subject matter in teaching young people to understand and peacefully resolve hurtful conflict created by conditioned, prejudicial thinking. The final step was to create appropriate educational resources and training for teachers to teach about the cause and effect of conditioned thinking. (<http://www.atriumsoc.org/resources-overview.php>)

### **BioCognitive Peace Education™ and Youth-At-Risk**

As stated above, the main intent of BioCognitive Peace Education™ is to design a comprehensive insight for teaching young people about the basic factors of conflict-creating conditioning and escalation-prevention. BioCognitive Peace Education™ is also designed to provide therapists with a thorough understanding of the multiple causes of prejudicial conditioning, so they may assist At-Risk youth to cope with the effects of the bully/victim cycle. Thus, BioCognitive Peace Education™ can be effectively applied as a multi-purpose program.

### **Cognitive-Emotive-Bio-reactive Conditioning**

From the individual to the group, conflict begins identically with conditioned pre-judgments. An unexamined thought initiates a domino effect of fearful emotions,

which in turn trigger the biological fight-or-flight system. Although this may be necessary when there is real danger, it is inappropriate when prompted by an unverified, imagined threat. This cognitive, emotive, bio-reactive coupling produces a powerful psychosomatic reaction of conflict internally and externally. In BioCognitive Peace Education™ this situation is called a "CEB" or a "Cognitive–Emotive–Bio-reactive." The term CEB encompasses the whole of prejudicial conditioning, not just the cognitive or mental process initiating this domino effect of the three-stage process. As soon as one becomes conscious of this process, one can avoid conflict at the primary prevention level. In other words, by recognizing the underlying structure at this fundamental level, one can prevent detrimental conflict from happening as it occurs, and therefore be free from having to react out of it. But this awareness is based on the assumption that the fundamental, bio-reactive, holding pattern of this part of the brain can be properly attended to.

### **BioCognitive Peace Education™ and the Bully/Victim Cycle**

BioCognitive Peace Education™ has been expressly designed to reflect the nature and structure of the bully/victim cycle that creates conflict in the way we have been conditioned to think and act. BioCognitive Peace Education™ uses the relevant context of the bully/victim cycle to demonstrate the cause and effect of prejudicial conditioning because all ages can relate to it. Young people can most easily understand prejudicial conditioning if it is grounded in their real, daily experiences. From the concrete rather than the abstract, they can come to understand what prejudicial conditioning is, how it affects them, and how it impacts the world.

### **MAP S.T.A.R.S.™ —Self-Defense for Self-Understanding**

At the same time young people are taught about the fundamental structure and nature of the bully/victim cycle, they are introduced to a specially designed system of mental and physical self-defense skills called MAP S.T.A.R.S.™ (Mental and Physical Safe Training Awareness Response System). In this way, the young person not only gains insight into the initial impulse of conditioned, prejudicial thinking at the primary or prevention level, but also learns to work out conflict at the secondary or resolution level by the use of verbal, de-escalation techniques. In addition, the young person at the tertiary or management level also builds confidence through avoiding a freeze, fight or flight reaction to an immediate potential threat as well as future supposed threats that are caused by the bio-reactive fight or flight system that gives the prejudicial conditioning its biological authority. By inhibiting the reinforcement of old, psychological and emotional impulses, this unique process creates a space in the biologically reactive system for creative, new actions.

(<http://www.atriumsoc.org/programs-model-halifax.php>)

### **Dispelling Cognitive Distortions**

When an event occurs that disturbs us, automatic thoughts enter our brain so fast and so mechanically that we don't notice them. And if we don't notice them, we certainly won't question them. Still, they affect our attitude, our mood, our body and our ability to function clearly. These thoughts, based on either false information or a misperception of reality, are often referred to as "cognitive distortions."

When a conditioned thought/emotion triggers one of these distortions, it typically stimulates the bio-reactive survival system in the old brain. This situation occurs when we can't see through the falsehood, and the old brain is reacting to the image as if it were true. But if we can counteract this with an observational viewpoint, we can see how a conditioned, prejudicial image (say, of a bully) can jump in and lie to us about a need to protect ourselves.

### **Looping or Biocognosis™**

However, the problem occurs when we can't see through the falsehood and the old brain is reacting to it as if it were true. Whether in the bully/victim cycle situations or in conventional daily life, recurring cognitive distortions cause us unnecessary conflict. Even when the outer stimulus of a bully, for example, is removed, this triggering process can get internalized. In BioCognitive Peace Education™ this is called "looping" or "biocognosis™", as the stimulus spins around and around, with the old bio-reactive brain constantly sending messages of a "threat" to the cognitive and emotive parts of the system, when, in fact, there is none at all.

### **Fight or Flight System Triggered by an Imaginary Threat**

It is most significant that this biological fight or flight system can be triggered inappropriately by an image of a threat when the actual threat is not there. This part of the brain cannot differentiate between an actual threat and a supposed one. Behind the psycho-emotive conditioning, this deeper biological ("bio-reactive") conditioning holds or locks the initial psychological image of a threat in place. No amount of rationalization can reach that deeper place. We have to get to it by the back door: that is, by going through the body to give the deeper, biological/bio-reactive conditioning what it wants – to feel confident that it can fight, that this more primitive part of the brain can deal with the threat by preparing the body to defend itself. This part of the brain only "knows" that there is a "threat" created by an image and to it, it is "real." This is very evident in young people we call Youth-At-Risk who have been continuously abused and therefore perceive the world as a threat, even though they may be in a non-threatening situation. In other words, the biological fight or flight system—the bio-reactive part of the old brain survival system—is stuck in the "on" position.

### **Disrupting the Biocognosis™ Looping Pattern**

To disrupt this biocognosis™ looping pattern, young people are taken into a safe, controlled environment where they are taught the MAP S.T.A.R.S.™ set of self-defense techniques. This purposely triggers the flight or fight mechanism while simultaneously instilling the confidence to be able to "fight". All the old brain really desires is to feel able to protect itself from harm, whether real or imaginary. Remarkably, even a little physical training goes a long way. This process has worked especially well with youth-at-risk as a therapeutic process, although it is applicable to everyone, whether they have been a victim of serious bullying or not. As the participants integrate their newfound insights with the newly

acquired physical ability to handle hostile situations, prejudicial, conditioned ideas of imagined enemies fade and automatic triggers are extinguished.

### **Psychosomatic Homeopathy**

In the same way that homeopathy works through a system of "like curing like," developing this specialized set of self-defense skills cures the need to use those skills. The primitive brain acknowledges them with confidence, and relaxes. As one becomes conscious of this newfound insight into prejudicial, conditioned patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, one becomes aware of the potential to be creative in each fresh, new moment. Thus, BioCognitive Peace Education™ brings an enhanced proprioception both physically and mentally to the very foundation of conflict. Through role-playing, developing cognitive awareness and expanding their insight into conditioned, prejudicial thinking, young people thrive in this environment of non-violent alternatives for resolving conflict.

The Youth Peace Literacy books are on permanent display at the International Museum of Peace and Solidarity in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, the Commonwealth of Independent States and at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima Japan.

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